DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 265 260 UD 024 660

AUTHOR Currie, Jan; Breadmore, Jim
TITLE Montessori and Krishnamurti: A Comparison of Their Educational Philosophies and Schools in Practice in the U.S. and India.
PUB DATE 83
NOTE 28p.; In: Comparative and International Studies and the Theory and Practice of Education. Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Australian Comparative and International Education Society (11th, Hamilton, New Zealand, August 21-24, 1983). See UD 024 646.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Classroom Environment; *Comparative Education; *Early Childhood Education; Educational Objectives; Educational Philosophy; *Educational Theories; Elementary Education; Government School Relationship; *Open Education; *Teacher Role; Teacher Student Relationship
IDENTIFIERS India; *Krishnamurti (J); Montessori (Maria); *Montessori Method

ABSTRACT

The educational philosophies of Maria Montessori and Jiddu Krishnamurti are compared and contrasted in this paper. The discussion is based on texts by both educators and direct observation of some of the schools (United States, Australia and India) where these ideas are being implemented. First, general principles of each educator are discussed. Both are said to have condemned traditional approaches to education and to have objected to the record of state involvement in education. The next three sections describe their ideas regarding: (1) how children learn and the role children should take in their own education; (2) the attributes, characteristics, and training of teachers, and the teacher-child relationship; and (3) the proper education environment, with focus on discipline, competition, evaluation, and the use of methods. In conclusion, it is said that Montessori's and Krishnamurti's philosophies have more similarities than differences. Children love being at both kinds of school. Their schools have successfully deinstitutionalized the learning process and made the teacher-pupil relationship a caring and loving one. The major difference between the two types of education is the approach to method: Krishnamurti scorns adopting a particular method while Montessori tried to design a method that was based on her observation of the "natural" child. (KH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

K. L. Crooke

Australian Comparative and International Education Society

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ED265260

MONTESSORI AND KRISHNAMURTI: A COMPARISON OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHIES AND SCHOOLS IN PRACTICE IN THE U.S. AND INDIA

by

Jan Currie
School of Education, Murdoch University

and

Jim Breadmore
Western Australian Institute of Technology

CS 206 660

Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Australian Comparative and International Education Society (11th, Hamilton, New Zealand, 21-24 August, 1983).

MONTESSORI AND KRISHNAMURTI: A COMPARISON OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHIES AND SCHOOLS IN PRACTICE IN THE UNITED STATES AND INDIA

JAN CURRIE and JIM BREADMORE

Maria Montessori (1870-1952) and Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-) are two educators who argue strongly for different structures of educational practices to those of the traditional structures. Both see traditional educational practices, methods and teacher centred schools as inhibitors to the innate learning drives of young people. Although these two educators met when Montessori was interned in India during the Second World War, there is no evidence to suggest that either one influenced the other regarding their respective educational viewpoints and conclusions. Montessori had been invited to India by the Theosophical Society, the society which had proclaimed Krishnamurti as the New World Teacher, but by the time of their meeting this distinction had been rejected by Krishnamurti and he had disassociated himself from the society.[1]

The writings of both these educators evidence penetrating criticisms of traditional education but what makes the comparison of these two educators more interesting is not so much their attacks on traditional systems as their advocacy of an entirely different kind of schooling which, each claims, would bring about a new type of civilized human being. According to Krishnamurti, only a psychological revolution can bring about this transformation while Montessori calls for an acceptance of children which would allow children themselves to reveal laws of psychic construction hitherto unknown. Both believe that if non-violent civilizations are to emerge on this planet and the potential for human intelligence is to be achieved, then it is essential for traditional educational practices to be abandoned as counter productive. Both educators agree on the need for an entirely new approach to education but there are several fundamental and significant points of application on which they disagree. The purpose of this paper is to illuminate the essential thinking of these two educators and bring into focus some similarities and differences of their respective approaches. The paper will also describe, briefly, some of the schools where each of the educator's writings are being implemented.

ED 024 660

The paper has been organized into the structure that Montessori designated as the "triangle of education": the child, the adult and the environment. In the discussion of the child, how the child learns and the role the child should take in his or her own education, will be described. The discussion dealing with the second point of the triangle, the adult, will deal with the attributes, characteristics and training of teachers and what each educator sees as a necessary relationship between teacher and child. The discussion of the triangle's third point will concentrate on what each educator sees as an essential educational environment and this will incorporate such issues as discipline, competition, evaluation and the use of methods. Before examining each educator's viewpoint concerning these three categories some of their general observations of education will be noted.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS OF EDUCATION

Condemnation of the Traditional Approach to Education

Both educators look at traditional education from a world point of view. Each argues that state education ignores the fundamental significance of life and has failed to attend to the total development of the individual. Government education, both argue, is out of balance. It concentrates too heavily on the mere transmission of knowledge and unquestioning obedience to authority, and it fails to allow individuals to express their own creativity and take responsibility for their own thinking and actions.

Both Krishnamurti and Montessori's objection of State educational practices is left in no doubt and the similarity of their criticisms is replete in both their writings. Montessori writes:

> "In most State controlled systems, what matters is that the programme shall be fulfilled. ... what happens then is that young people leave university with their minds so shackled and sacrificed that they have lost all power of individuation and can no longer judge the problems of the age in which they live" (1973:9).

In the same vein Krishnamurti writes:

> "Government control of education is a calamity. There is no hope of peace and order in the world as long as education is the handmaid of the State..."He does not hesitate in asserting that, "nothing of fundamental value can be accomplished through mass instruction." (1953: 85)

Montessori found, after making a study of contemporary European educational systems, that the children were reduced to immobility in the classroom - "not disciplined," she said, "but annihilated." The children in public schools are "like butterflies mounted on pins, fastened each to a place, the desk, spreading their useless wings of barren and meaningless knowledge which they have acquired" (Montessori, 1964:14).

Krishnamurti has also written about the annihilation of the individual and has condemned the present system of schooling as "making us subservient, mechanical and deeply thoughtless; though it awakened us intellectually, inwardly it leaves us incomplete, stultified and uncreative" (Krishnamurti, 1953:15). And in another condemnation of present-day education he has stated that "Education throughout the world has failed, it has produced mounting destruction and misery" (Krishnamurti, 1953:77). There is just as much, if not more, poverty, starvation and expenditure on armaments today as there was one hundred years ago.

State Involvement in Education: Reform vs. Revolution

It is significant that Krishnamurti refuses to accept any State funding for the Krishnamurti Foundation Schools and also significant that the Montessori Society of Germany was abolished by the political police in 1935; and Mussolini's Minister of Education put a stop to all official Montessori activities in Italy in 1936. Both educators are highly critical of the record of State involvement in education and although Montessori says that "The State must never abandon the child." (1973:12) Krishnamurti expresses the opinion that as long as education is in the hands of the State, there is no hope for peace.

Montessori argued that the State had a duty to become involved in the education of children if the home was unable to do this for lack of means. But nevertheless this did not stop her from asking whether there

was "anything more immovable, stagnant, and indifferent than the education of today?" (1973:13). In talking to the senior students at one of the Krishnamurti Foundation Schools, Krishnamurti outlined his objections to State education:

> We see what education has been used for. Human beings throughout the world ... are being educated to conform, to fit into society and into their culture.... Is that education or is education something entirely different? Can education see to it that the human mind is not drawn into that vast stream and so destroyed?...Real education means that a human mind, your mind, not only is capable of being excellent in mathematics, geography and history, but also can never under any circumstances, be drawn into the stream of society. Because that stream which we call living, is very corrupt, is immoral, is violent, is greedy. That stream is our culture. (1974:12:13)

Without question Krishnamurti is among the most trenchant of contemporary critics of State education. Again and again he condemns modern-day mass education. "Education throughout the world," he says, "has failed, it has produced mounting destruction and misery...regimentation and prejudice are being cultivated and enforced" (1953:77).

Although Montessori joins Krishnamurti in the view that mass educational systems have failed in their efforts to properly educate young people, she does not exclude the possibility that State education can be reformed. Krishnamurti, on the other hand, denies that any reform can ever bring about, what he calls, 'right education'. 'Right education' can only be achieved, he maintains, when the State is excluded from determining what the goals of education should be. It is esential to appreciate this difference of viewpoint between the two educators. Montessori holds that "...any reform of education must be based on the personality of man" (1973:6) whereas Krishnamurti denies that reform of any kind would be capable of bringing about the psychological revolution which, he insists, is the only condition that can bring 'right education' into being. The start and finish of Krishnamurti's whole educational viewpoint must be seen against this background of psychological revolution. Educational reforms are self defeating, he argues. "Obviously there must be a radical revolution. The world crisis demands it. Our lives demand it. ... There must be a fundamental, radical

revolution because everything about us has collapsed." (Krishnamurti quoted in Neil, 1957:6) Montessori had faith that educational reform could correct the ills she saw in government education but Krishnamurti sees that reform is retrogressive. The summary of Krishnamurti's arguments against reform and advocacy for a completely new approach to education is that he sees reform as a condition wherein there has been no true action but merely a gradual process of becoming static. Reform is born not out of action but reaction, out of opposition and this process is an endless one of replacing one orthodox reform with another but always fundamentally maintaining the same disasterous structure.

In their desire to construct a new society, Montessori and Krishnamurti do not advocate collective upbringing or the control of education by the state. This is why both writers could not be described as social reconstructionists in the political sense but more as psychological reconstructionists, that is, both see that change in society can only truly come about in an enduring way when the individuals who comprise society undergo a radical psychological change. This change would be to develop critical awareness through self-education. This, they have both written, demands schools that are small where children receive individual attention and where schools are autonomous, not controlled by any government body. Krishnamurti would add that schools should also not be controlled by any religious body.

THE CHILD

Child as basically good

There is no difference in how Montessori and Krishnamurti perceive the fundamental nature of the child. They both hark back to Rousseau's notion of the child as a noble savage, as basically good (see Boyd, 1962) Montessori wrote that "the child is a well-spring of love" (1967:289). Krishnamurti does not say explicitly that the child is good and represents love but he implies this when he writes that by making children aware of their conditioning, they can discover 'what is', in other words, they can discover basic enduring values which will allow them to "flower in goodness and love" (1953:22).

Freedom and order

Both Montessori and Krishnamurti agree with Rousseau that in order for the child to continue to 'be good', there has to be an environment of freedom. Rousseau's solution to the contaminating influence of the society was to isolate the child from it so that the free spirit could develop without the need for societal moulding. Neither Montessori nor Krishnamurti would go as far as to isolate the child completely from society yet they both would 'prepare' an environment that would be in the words of Krishnamurti, an oasis in society.

The child would not be free to do whatever he or she felt like doing, a la Rousseau or A.S. Neill (granted, even they had a few restrictions on children's freedom); rather the child would temper freedom with order and responsibility. Montessori says in The Montessori Method that "the liberty of the child should have as its *limit* the collective interest" (1964:87). Montessori felt that responsibility towards others and an 'ordered' community would develop naturally as the children worked together and came to respect each other's work. She felt there may be times when the child offends or annoys others. Yet, for the most part, if the teacher does not intervene, the children will create their own order. Montessori's description of discipline is what is known in present-day terminology as intrinsic discipline or internal locus of control. In her words the process of acquiring intrinsic order or discipline is almost mystical. She states:

> Such discipline could never be obtained by commands, by sermonizings, in short, through any of the disciplinary devices universally known. In fact, such discipline...does not depend upon the teacher but upon a sort of miracle, occurring in the inner life of each child (1964:349).

Krishnamurti would agree with Montessori in desiring the child to develop his or her own sense of order. He believes that "for a human being, order means order within himself (1974:56). He also perceives of the necessity to combine freedom and order by saying, "I would help the child to be free and yet at the same time have order and discipline without conformity (1974:57). Yet he does not want the teacher to discipline the child for this implies obedience and would mean that the child is submitting to a higher authority. He states explicitly that

"domination or compulsion of any kind is a direct hindrance to freedom and intelligence" (1953:106). In order to bring about a community of individuals who are both free and responsible toward each other, Krishnamurti feels that "it is particularly important that students and teachers meet regularly to discuss all matters relating to the well-being of the whole group (1953:92). (This reminds one of A.S. Neil's school meetings at Summerhill.) Krishnamurti goes on to state why he feels a student council should be formed and that students should govern themselves, choosing those who would be responsible for the carrying out of decisions. He feels that this form of self government in school is a preparation for self government in later life.

If the child continues to be an annoyance to the community, both Montessori and Krishnamurti offer the same advice: "to observe the child's tendencies, his aptitudes, his temperament, to understand his difficulties, to take into account his heredity and parental influence" (1953:92). Montessori is best known as an advocate of observation and it was through her own observation of the child that she developed her "method". She believed that in the beginning most children will wander around the room, looking for something that will attract their interest and they may annoy other children but they will eventually become "normalized"[3] when they find something that interests them and they become completely absorbed in a piece of work. The teacher may have to pay special attention to the child who is not "normalized", to take the child by the hand and lead him or her to an activity that will captivate the curiosity.

Total Development of the Child

Finally, in this section I would like to examine how Montessori and Krishnamurti view the total personality of the child. Montessori has said that "our aim with very young children must be to aid the spontaneous development of the mental, spiritual and physical personality and not to make of the child a cultured individual in the commonly accepted sense of the term" (1964:230). Likewise Krishnamurti has pointed to three elements of the personality that need to be in harmony: "The body, the emotions and the mind make the total human being, and without all of them living together harmoniously, conflict is inevitable" (1958:17).

In both of their writings, there is clearly a humanistic approach to developing a confluence of the affective and cognitive aspects of the personality. It is obvious that they both desire the total development of the human being. Nevertheless, if one reads deeply enough and perhaps "between the lines", each of these writers puts their emphasis on a different side of the balance. Krishnamurti, at times, almost denigrates the intellect in order to stress the importance of intelligence or intuition which he says is the highest order of intelligence. He puts it in other words when he states, "Mere education of the conscious without understanding the unconscious brings contradiction into human lives (1958:26). He believes that "the hidden mind is far more vital and vigorous than the superficial" (1958:27). Although Krishnamurti feels the need to integrate the total being, the undeniable core to that is found in the inner being, in one's intelligence and that is reiterated quite plainly in the following quote:

> Intelligence is much greater than intellect, for it is the integration of reason and love; but there can be intelligence only when there is self-knowledge, the deep understanding of the total process of oneself (1953:65).

Krishnamurti argues that it is necessary to go beyond the intellect, beyond all aspects of mind and the construct of time in order to penetrate to the quintessence of the learning process. It is in these aspects of his philosophy that he goes more deeply into the functioning of the mind than Montessori does. For example, Krishnamurti states that,

> A mind that functions in time is still a limited mind. But a mind which does not function in time is extraordinarily alert, is tremendously alive and can impart its aliveness to a mind which is still seeking, enquiring, innocent. So we have discovered something new (1964:68).

This is certainly an unusual idea and may be difficult for many to comprehend. Most readers might regard such a statement as being unscientific, not able to be tested and therefore with no validity. Yet those who have studied his writings (such as physicist David Bohm) and have come to understand his mode of thinking believe he is discovering new insights and he is not 'just another Indian guru' pontificating without any substance. Although the foregoing discussion is somewhat tangential, the important issue is that Krishnamurti's writings point in the direction of understanding *beyond time*. To him, this means that there must be no attachments to people, to places, to opinions.

Montessori, on the other hand, is very much attached to reality, to the here and now. This is indicated in the following statement:

> When man loses himself in mere speculations, his environment will remain unchanged, but when imagination starts from contact with reality, thought begins to construct works by means of which the external world becomes transformed (1965:199).

She does not deny that there are persons who have had "non-sensorial impressions" yet she feels since these are such rare occurrences, these "spiritual impressions" need to be set aside. Therefore, she insists, "the single material of construction for intellectual activities [is] that of the senses. Imagination can have only a sensory basis" (1965:205). In an earlier section Montessori had quoted the Aristotelian axiom that "there is nothing in the intellect which was not first in the senses" (1965:203). Therefore, her analysis of the child rests very much on a model of the rational human being whose attributes can be discovered through the science of observation. Yet it cannot be said that Montessori denies that irrational or extra-sensory perceptions exist for in other passages when she is discussing the essence of moral education, she turns to the intangible qualities that need to be developed - "to keep alive and to perfect psychical sensibility is the essence of moral education" (1965:277). She says that moral education cannot be taught just as religious education cannot be taught but rather the child comes to perceive the teacher's spirit.

> And undoubtedly the day will come when his spirit will become sensitive to our spirit; and then he will begin to taste that supreme delight which lies in the intimate contact of soul with soul and our voice will no longer be heard by his ear alone (1965:277).

No doubt one might suspect that the teachers that Montessori and Krishnamurti have imagined for their schools of "right education" would be very rare individuals. Indeed they are; yet they represent people from almost all nationalities and of varying types of personalities and backgrounds. Nevertheless, it is easy to see in their respective writings many common qualities that Montessori and Krishnamurti want their teachers to have.

The Teacher

It is significant that both Krishnamurti and Montessori state that they would rather not have government-trained teachers in their schools. Montessori would prefer to take a young woman[4] who had not had any teacher training and train her in her own methods. This was mainly because she felt her method of teaching was in direct opposition to that used in government schools. She put it this way:

> A new type of mistress has evolved; instead of facility in speech, she has to acquire the power of silence; instead of teaching, she has to observe, instead of the proud dignity of one who claims to be infallible, she assumes the vesture of humility (1965:105).

Krishnamurti goes so far as to say that "teaching should not become a specialist's profession" (1953:46). He also says that "people who have no academic degrees often make the best teachers because they are willing to experiment; not being specialists, they are interested in learning" (1953:109).

For Krishnamurti the important thing is for the teacher to have "a burning desire to teach" (1953:109). He sees the teacher more as an artist than a technician for if the teacher relies on technique the child will be fragmented. He feels that it is only through love that the child can develop as an integrated being. He feels, of course, that the fundamental problem in education is the educator for very few know what love is, that is, to love with no attachment. He also believes that there is "no method by which one can become the right kind of educator (1953:111). He would encourage the teachers to "find out what experiments are being made in education in different parts of the world" (1953:104) and to be constantly questioning their own approach and what the purpose of education should be.

The main message that Krishnamurti offers teachers is to know their own values, why they hold them as values, and also to know the importance of human relationship and their relationship to nature and the total environment. He writes that,

> It is the function of the educator to examine deeply his own thoughts and feelings and to put aside those values which have given him security and comfort, for only then can he help his students to be self-aware and to understand their own urges and fears" (1953:38).

Krishnamurti does not want a teacher who is in any way dogmatic or attached to an ideology because this would mean he would be guiding the child toward a particular goal which would block the child's freedom to discover him/herself. As stated above, he feels there is no method to train the educator nor does he feel that the educator should adopt a particular method; thus he says: "If the teacher is of the right kind, he will not depend on a method, but will study each individual child" (1953:27).

Like Montessori, Krishnamurti believes in observation as a key to understanding the nature of a child. He states that: "To understand a child we have to watch him at play, study him in his different moods; we cannot project upon him our own prejudices, hopes and fears, or mould him to fit the pattern of our desires (1953:47). Montessori writes in a similar vein:

> The fundamental quality [of the teacher] is the capacity for "observation"; a quality so important that the positive sciences were also called "science of observation" a term which was changed into "experimental" sciences for those in which observation is combined with experiment (1965:107).

Some writers have accused Montessori of developing a method and allowing no further experimentation to alter that method. This would be a decided disadvantage to utilizing Montessori's ideas as there is some truth in the warning of Krishnamurti that "strict adherence to a particular method indicates sluggishness on the part of the educator" (1953:23).

Yet, we disagree with those who describe Montessori as desiring no experimentation. There are places in her writing, e.g. The Montessori Method, where she states that "I believe that I have arrived at a selection of objects representing the minimum necessary to a practical sense education (1964:169). These objects constituted her didactic system. She felt that all of the didactic materials had to be used as a set and that those wanting to use them should undergo training either under her or someone trained by her to enable them to understand correctly the use of the materials. Yet, in the same book, she says, "I do not claim to have brought to perfection the method of sense training as applied to young children" (1964:215).

Further, in her introduction to The Formation of Man, written almost a half-century after she started her educational work, she has stated that it may have been a mistake to have termed her ideas as a "method" because this term has obstructed her message. She suggests that,

> For the word, "method," we should substitute something like this: "Help given in order that the human personality may achieve its independence," or "means offered to deliver the human personality from the oppression of age-old prejudices regarding education" (1975:5).

She goes on to compare the stage of her ideas on educating the child to the period of Galvani in relation to The Atomic Age.

> What I have shown in the immense potentiality of the child, she said again and again, is the existence of an energy which previously had not been taken into consideration. But as far as its utilisation or knowledge about it is concerned, we are still at the
>
> stage of Galvani when he realised that the flexing legs of the dead and decorticated frogs were due to some mysterious energy. He pointed this out and thus created the interest in electricity that evolved into atomic science (quoted in the foreword to The Advanced Montessori Method, written by Mario Montessori, 1965:xii).

In other words, the science of education is very young and much more experimentation is necessary, and indeed, desirable. She did not feel as though she had created the perfect system and she repeatedly remonstrated her "followers" not to look to her but to look to the child for the child holds the secret to the creation of a new human being.

Although she describes the necessity for experimentation and the need for a scientific pedagogy to develop, she does not see her teachers as merely scientists.

> The vision of the teacher should be at once precise like that of the scientist, and spiritual like that of the saint. The preparation for science and the preparation for sanctity should form a new soul, for the attitude of the teacher should be at once positive, scientific and spiritual (1965:113).

This may sound as though Montessori would desire to have a teacher who is more a scientist or one skilled in technique than an artist. Yet she distinguishes between the "spirit" of the scientist and his mere "mechanical skill":

> It is my belief that the thing we should cultivate in our teachers is more the <u>spirit</u> than the mechanical skill of the scientist; that is, the <u>direction</u> of the <u>preparation</u> should be toward the spirit rather than toward the mechanism (1964:9).

She wanted to awaken in the educator "an interest in natural phenomenon" so that he or she would carry out experiments and be ever observant of the child's nature. For she argues it is "from the child itself he will learn how to perfect himself as an educator" (1964:13). And in another place she states that it is the "art of the educator" to know what type of action to use in helping the child's personality to develop - when there should be no intervention and when actual teaching is demanded (1964:231).

She also feels that the teacher should not teach any particular dogma or ideology. She uses almost the same language that Krishnamurti does in describing the need for the teacher to be without prejudice or fear:

> Not in the service of any political or social creed should the teacher work, but in the service of the complete human being, able to exercise in freedom a self-disciplined will and judgment, unperverted by prejudice and undistorted by fear (1973:3).

Another point which is somewhat contentious among "Montessorians"[5] is the extent to which the teacher's "personality" should disappear, that is, that the teacher should make herself almost invisible. There are passages in which Montessori indicates this in so many words: "there remains for the teacher nothing but to observe" (1964:173). Yet she also emphasizes the importance of the personality of the teacher, of her "spirit" and "soul" that must be ever-present so that when a child feels the need to come into contact with the teacher's soul, the psychic relationship between the teacher and the child is readily established. In fact, she decided to change the name of the teacher into that of directress. At first this provoked many smiles for people thought she had no one to direct since the child educates him/herself. But, she explained, "her direction is much more profound and important than that which is commonly understood for this teacher directs the life and the soul" (1964:173).

Those "Montessorians" who argue that the teacher's "personality" should disappear, also describe the teacher as showing little emotion, not responding to the child either positively or negatively, not frowning if the child is making an error nor smiling in approval of a job well done. Yet, again, this is not borne out in Montessori's writings for she describes the need for the child, in the beginning, to seek external authority to make sure they are on the right path. "The teacher must then respond with a word of approval, encouraging him with a smile, like that of a mother to her baby" (1967:274). Nevertheless, she asserts that the need for obtaining the approval of an adult should diminish as the child grows and becomes more independent.

In summary, for both Krishnamurti and Montessori the teacher should be a warm and loving individual. They both believe that the teacher should be attractive, have an aesthetic sense in dress and be in harmony with the environment. This may not mean "beautiful" in the cultural sense but possessing an inner beauty that children immediately sense and to which they are drawn. For Krishnamurti, the personality of the teacher is the lynchpin of his "right education", yet for Montessori, the "prepared environment" is almost as equally important as the "right educator".

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Environment

Just as the teacher should be aesthetically pleasing in appearance, so the environment should be pleasing to the senses. Montessori writes about the attractiveness of the environment in general as follows:

> But what is above all essential is that it should be artistically beautiful. In this case, beauty is not produced by superfluity or luxury, but by grace and harmony of line and color, combined with that absolute simplicity necessitated by the lightness of the furniture (1965A:143-4).

Krishnamurti writes about the cultivation of good taste, knowing how to combine colours, how to wear colours that do not jar; yet, he says, "good taste is not the appreciation of beauty. Beauty is never personal.... To appreciate beauty is to see a mountain, to see the lovely trees without the 'you' being there (1974:28). Therefore, most of his schools are set in surroundings away from the hustle and bustle of city life. They are in naturally beautiful environments, in valleys surrounded by mountains or on large acerages in the middle of groves of trees. To him, nature and the observation of nature are important in a learning environment.

For Krishnamurti, another important aspect of the environment is that the child should feel secure in it. He says, "it should be the soil in which they can grow without fear, happily and integrally (1953:44). Krishnamurti also talks of the need for spontaneity and affection in the learning situation:

> There is, in both learning and love, a movement of freshness, a movement which is spontaneous, which is not held by circumstances. It is a free movement. So there is a tenuous, delicate connection between the two. But to learn and to love there must be a great deal of affection (1974:48).

Krishnamurti talks about the need for spontaneity and the need for freedom; yet as far as we have read, he does not deal with the need for movement in the classroom. In a way, he leaves this decision up to the teacher and in his writings, we believe, he is referring more to the need for intellectual freedom and sponaneity of the intelligence than to physical freedom or movement.

A problem in comparing Krishnamurti and Montessori concerning the type of learning environment they envisioned is that Montessori started

with developing an environment for 3 to 6 year olds, the famous Casa dei Bambini (Children's House) and Krishnamurti first started with a boarding school for secondary students and writes mostly about teaching older children. No doubt he feels it is important to begin by educating the very young and now many of his schools be in with pre-school children. Nevertheless he does not address the question of physical movement. He does believe that there should be dance and music, art and yoga and physical games but he does not recommend the necessity of physical movement while carrying out intellectual activities. For Montessori, this is one of her principal elements - children must be physically active and allowed to "be free to go and come as they like, throughout the entire day" (1964:81).

Of course, it is the teacher's duty to see that the children's movement is directed toward "useful" work. In this description of her "Children's House", Montessori encapsulates her philosophy of movement and discipline or freedom and order:

> A room in which all the children move about usefully, intelligently, and voluntarily, without committing any rought or rude act, would seem to me a classroom very well disciplined indeed (1964:93).

Montessori's description of the "prepared environment", her didactic materials and other aspects of the "method" are worked out in great detail in her books, The Montessori Method and The Advanced Montessori Method, Volumes I and II. There is no need to describe these in this paper; nevertheless, we wish to point out that she asserts that her method was devised from the observation of free children who develop through auto-education to become independent thinkers. Her aim in the cognitive development of the child is "to be able to distinguish, classify and catalogue external things on the basis of a secure order already established in the mind" (1965:169-170). She did not feel that intelligence was based on the accumulation of knowledge, not based on "photographing objects and keeping them one upon the other like the pages in an album," rather the quality of intelligence is "to build up its internal structure" so that it is capable of distinguishing and extracting the dominant characteristics of objects" (1965:173).

Krishnamurti is also against the accumulation of knowledge or knowledge for knowledge sake. He said in one of his talks with teachers:

> I am not against knowledge. There is a difference between learning and acquiring knowledge. Learning ceases when there is only accumulation of knowledge. .... When knowledge becomes all important learning ceases.... Learning is never an additive process. When one is learning, it is an active process (1974:62).

Although Krishnamurti asserts that there should be no method in the "right education", he does indicate through his writings and through his behaviour a particular method that he feels can penetrate beyond the "self" to the inner being and that is the "Socratic method". He uses a process of question and answer where there is no teacher or taught but in a collaborative way they seek the "truth". He writes:

> Only by encouraging the child to question the book, whatever it be, to inquire into the validity of the existing social values, traditions, forms of government, religious beliefs and so on, can the educator and parents hope to awaken and sustain his critical alertness and keen insight" (1953:41).

To develop this alertness and the flowering of the inner mind, Krishnamurti appears to rely principally on observation of nature and on penetrating inquiry; whereas Montessori relies on manipulation of her didactic materials to increase discrimination in the senses. Both of these educators stress the need to develop "free thinkers" and independent human beings. As well as their stress on individuality and condemnation of mass instruction, both writers also denigrate competition and competitive evaluation. Krishnamurti says: "real learning comes about when the competitive spirit has ceased" (1974:76). And further, on the question of evaluation or giving grades:

> Giving grades and marks to the student does not cultivate intelligence. On the contrary, it degrades the human dignity of understanding. This comparative evaluation cripples the mind - which does not mean that the teacher does not observe the progress of every student and keep a record of it (1958:7).

Montessori would thoroughly agree with what Krishnamurti has written concerning comparative evaluation. Equally Krishnamurti would wholeheartedly agree with Montessori's forceful statement about the need to abolish prizes and punishments:

> The prize and the punishment are incentives toward unnatural or forceful effort, and therefore we certainly cannot speak of the natural development of the child in connection with them. The jockey offers a piece of sugar to his horse before jumping into the saddle, the coachman beats his horse that he may respond to the signs given by the reins. And, yet, neither of these runs so superbly as the free horse of the plains (1964:21).

To conclude this section on environment, a final quote from Krishnamurti summarizes what both of these educators feel is the essence of the "right" educational environment:

> To develop self-expression, you must have from a tender age, the suitable environment that will give you the opportunity for expansion physically, emotionally and mentally, so that in this natural condition you can grow without fear, without being thwarted, so that your sense of perception of what is essential shall be entirely left to you and not be dominated by another (1930:11).

Their Schools in Practice

It is one thing to read about an educator's philosophy and another to see the philosophy put into practice. We have had the opportunity, over the past year, to visit at least twenty Montessori schools in the United States (18), Australia (1), and India (1) and four Krishnamurti Foundation schools in India (3) and the United States (1).

First, we should preface my remarks about these schools by saying that there is no such thing as a "pure" Montessori school or a "pure" Krishnamurti school. The schools varied according to their cultural, natural and physical environments, according to their clientele and, probably most imnportantly, according to the personality of their teachers. Among the Krishnamurti schools, some had boarding facilities and others were only for day students. Therefore, here, we will not try to describe each school as a separate entity, even though they each have their separate "personalities" or identities, for this would be too elaborate for the purpose of this paper. Rather, we will attempt to select what I saw as the similarities and differences in the overall atmosphere of the schools. There will be times when we will describe an aspect of a school that was exceptional or atypical from the others yet, on the whole, we will highlight what we saw as the essential aspects that were common to the schools of each type.

To begin, we should state that this project began as a study of alternative schools, that is education which is alternative to what is "traditionally" found in government schools. By most accounts, Krishnamurti's and Montessori's concepts of education would be antithetical to what is found in most government schools, i.e. no examinations, no grades, no competition, no prizes or punishment, freedom of movement, and a small number of students per teacher, to note a few of the differences. What, for me, was a truly amazing situation was the fact that Montessori's system of education has, in the last ten years, been adopted by at least 55 public systems of education in the United States. We saw two of these schools, one in the Cincinnati Public School System and the other in the Dallas Public School System. These two schools cater to pupils who are very different from those in most Montessori schools. For the most part, Montessori schools in the United States, Australia and India are privately-run and attract students from the middle and upper classes. The fees range from as low as $800 a year to as high as $3,000 a year in the United States. In contrast, the Montessori public schools in Cincinnati and Dallas are in the heart of the slums and have the highest number of children on welfare in their respective city systems. They also have a high proportion of children from middle-class, professional homes because the main reason these schools were established was to attract children from the outer suburbs to the inner city so that the public school system could comply with integration legislation without forced busing. As a result both lower class and middle class parents are receiving an alternative education that they desperately desire. The test scores of the children have skyrocketed so that they are now way above the national norms and near the top of the schools within the city system.

The Krishnamurti Foundation (hereafter referred to as KF) schools visited are catering mainly to upper middle and upper class children. A few scholarship places in each school are reserved for children of the lower classes. The fees would prohibit all but the fairly well-to-do to attend these schools. However, the Krishnamurti Foundation of India has established village schools in Rishi Valley and Rajghat and a free school for the poor in Bombay. Although the main clientele for both Montessori and Krishnamurti schools is an elite one, there has not been a total neglect of the poor.

Both the Montessori and KF schools are similar in being co-educational and also in having, in general, a low pupil to teacher ratio. In the Montessori schools the pupil/teacher ratio was from a low

of 8:1 in a university Montessori Laboratory school to a high of 25:1 in the public Montessori schools although some classrooms had teaching assistants or interns which again reduced the pupil to teacher ratio. The KF school in Ojai, California has the lowest pupil/teacher ratio (12:1) among the KF schools while The Rishi Valley School in India had the highest ratio (25:1).

The Children

On entering both Montessori and KF schools we sensed a great joy in the learning process and we could feel that the children liked being in the schools. The children greeted us with an openness and a friendliness that we felt was generated from the school environment. There was also a peacefulness in these schools. This did not mean there was no conflict or dispute between children and their teachers or among teachers; there were. But, on the whole, the communities were harmonious ones. The sounds we heard were the hum of children busy at their work, the laughter and gay chatter on the playground. We did not hear loud voices, angry shouts or see children pushing and shoving each other on the playground. The children in the Montessori schools were freer in their movement in and out of the classroom since movement is built into Montessori's method. Aside from the pre-schools in KF schools that ran along modified Montessori methods, the children generally sat at desks or tables with very little mobility during the lessons. They were free to ask to be excused from the classroom to go to the bathroom or to get a drink but generally they sat at their desks (granted, some of these had been cut to a low size so that the children could sit on pillows or on the floor in front of their desks).

In none of the Montessori or KF schools did we ever see violence, neither corporal punishment nor harsh language was used. The children, on the whole, were extremely well behaved. The children in one of the KF schools in India tended to be a bit disruptive in the classroom and the teachers comnplained of the children abusing their freedom yet, to our knowledge, they did not physically punish the children but merely hoped that they would gain greater responsibility for their actions as they matured. The children in this school were extremely bright, happy and energetic and we believe with greater mobility in the learning environment and more individualization in the instructional process, the children would use their freedom with greater personal responsibility and the teachers would not have to wait until the tenth standard for them to become mature learners. (It would be a tragedy to dampen their spontaneity and eagerness for learning by using authoritarian techniques.)

The Teachers

The teachers in both types of schools, as a group, appear highly dedicated to educating children and talked about Montessori's and Krishnamurti's ideas, respectively, with almost missionary fervour. The teachers seemed more serious-minded than the average "government" teacher; they were eager to talk about new educational ideas and debate some of the old arguments in education. On the whole, the teachers in both types of schools were highly educated with at least a Bachelor of Education degree but many times with post-graduate degrees to the PhD level. Although these teachers were trying to implement particular educational philosophies, they were open to new ideas and willing to experiment. This, surprisingly, was true more so of the Montessori teachers than the Krishnamurti ones. (It should be noted here that the Montessori schools visited were mostly affiliated with the American Montessori Society which is known for being more eclectic and more willing to incorporate ideas from other educators besides Montessori.) In sum, the teachers could be described as vital people, alert intellectually and deeper thinkers than the average person. The Krishnamurti teachers tended to be more spiritually-inclined and to think more deeply about their own cultural conditioning. Yet we must hasten to add that some of the deepest thinkers we encountered were teachers in a Krishnamurti school who were using a modified Montessori method in the pre-school.

The teachers were generally paid rather low salaries in both types of schools, except for those in the Montessori public schools. It could be conjectured that most teachers were working because they were satisfied with their jobs, they enjoyed teaching and they did not need to work for a living (the teachers we interviewed said that they were happy and liked teaching). For example, in India many of the Krishnamurti teachers could not afford to even own a scooter whereas in the United States they could not afford to run a car. This indicates that the teachers were barely earning a living wage, according to their respective society's standards.

In both types of schools there was a genuine affection and caring for children. This was more so in the case in the KF schools because a principal criterion for selecting teachers in KF schools is that the individual should be of a loving nature. In the KF schools there is a genuine camaraderie among the teachers and a feeling that they are working together to create a loving atmosphere where the children can enjoy learning. Teachers in Montessori schools have generally gone through a

process of self-selection to undertake Montessori training and then to start their own schools. This does not mean that they would be any less caring as individual teachers. Nevertheless, we would have to say that in my observation we saw more open display of affection and love in the KF schools than in most Montessori schools.

The Environment

Krishnamurti schools were set in beautiful natural surroundings - oases away from the hustle and bustle of city life. The school in California had the most aesthetically pleasing buildings that were constructed in wood to blend in with the surrounding oak grove. The buildings in India would not receive design awards and were not in the best condition, but the beauty of their natural surroundings tended to lessen the barrenness of the classrooms.

The Montessori schools were in a variety of environments from the basement of churches, nursing homes for the aged, to their own schools equipped with gymnasiums, swimming pools and elaborate resource centres. The classroom environments, almost without exception, were extremely artistic. There was a desire on the part of the teachers to make every activity aesthetic and to then arrange the activities on shelves in a harmonious manner. The classrooms usually had attractive wall-hangings and colourful paintings and many potted plants to make the children feel like they were in a home rather than in an 'institution'. Sometimes the schools were located in homes and the attempt was made to change them as little as posdsible into school-like environments. Many schools had pets and gardens to grow vegetables and flowers. They had creative outdoor play areas and generally allowed the children the freedom to move in and out of the classroom whenever they chose. Some parents did not feel as relaxed about this freedom as the teachers were because they saw school as a place for work and home as a place for play. Montessori teachers, for the most part, do not make a distinction between work and play and encourage the children to consider all of their activities as their 'work'.

Nevertheless, there was tremendous pressure from the parents in both types of schools to develop academic excellence and the educational programmes were affected by this pressure. Therefore, there was much more stress on intellectual skills and cognitive achievement than on developing the affective side and enhancing the sensitivity of the children although this may have been slightly more catered to in the KF schools, through drama, dance, music and what was known as culture classes where there was

an emphasis on discussing values and personal relationships. On the other hand, the emphasis on cognitive development was carried out in a very traditional manner in KF schools. Although there was great autonomy given to the individual teachers to choose a suitable method and to do whatever they desired within their classroom, the methods chosen separated teachers from each other in isolated classroom settings (i.e. there was little team-teaching or open-teaching methods). The teachers tended to teach their group of children as a total group without individualizing their instruction, with little peer-teaching and generally they relied on a teacher-dominated lesson format. It appeared as though little experimentation was taking place with such educational ideas as contract teaching, individually-paced learning, group projects and simulation/role playing activities (although a little of this was seen). Whereas Montessori had incorporated many of these "newer" educational ideas in her "method" so we saw vertical grouping (3-6, 6-9, 9-12) with a lot of peer teaching and of course almost total individualization of learning activities although small groups worked together and occasionally class lessons were presented in Montessori schools.

Because the Montessori schools tended to be mostly pre-schools with a few schools continuing on to the junior high level, they did not feel the effects of government examinations for entrance into university education. Whereas KF schools were particularly affected by the government examinations when the children reached the secondary level. As a consequence even the lower grades were affected, perhaps out of administrative convenience rather than out of educational necessity to prepare children for examinations. The effects were seen in rigid timetabling, an increasingly greater amount of homework with each higher grade level, more class examinations and a greater emphasis on accumulation of knowledge rather than inquiring into the nature of knowledge. Government textbooks and syllabuses were used and followed almost to the letter, especially in the Indian higher secondary levels. In the lower grades, the pressure was kept to a minimum and here there was much more spontaneity in the learning process. As mentioned above, there was more of a stress on art, music and drama in the KF schools, especially in India where the children entered into these activities with great enthusiasm and with a considerable amount of talent. Yet, we think, the best art teacher we have ever seen was one in the Cincinnati Montessori public school. She had all the children selecting their own art activities from about twenty different choices and each child became very quickly absorbed in their own artistic creation. When they were finished

with one activity, they were free to walk around and choose another one which they readily became engaged in with a minimum of teacher instruction. The class was amazing to watch - there were some children painting, others weaving, others creating collages out of mixed materials, one or two mixing paints and discriminating colours, while others were solving perception puzzles. It was a high stimulating environment. The teacher, of course, was constantly on the move answering questions and giving instructions but her major task had been to prepare such a creative environment. We never saw children sitting, waiting to be told what to do next, or queueing for materials or messing around in a corner. There was a constant hum of activity. And the teacher was full of vitality, a very dynamic woman. You could feel this in the atmosphere in the room and we are sure the children were responding to her dynamism. Another excellent music program that we saw was in the Dallas Montessori public school where the children were learning to play the violin using the "Suzuki" method and it appeared to be quite a successful program from the performance at Parents' Night that I attended. We are pointing out these two examples to demonstrate that a lot of energy and creativity is being poured into Montessori schools to develop exciting art and music programs. Montessori schools have been criticized for the lack of these in the past.

In both types of schools there is tremendous parental interest in the children's education but only a limited amount of parental involvement. Again there were exceptions to this. In the Montessori public school in Cincinnati we saw a university professor of engineering instructing teacher aides on how to assist the children to use the challenging playground equipment he had designed and helped build. Parents in that school were involved in taking the children on excursions, coming into the classroom to give lessons and also raising money for the school. Both Montessori and Krishnamurti stress the importance of educating the parents so that there is a continuity of learning environments between the home and the school. Both types of schools had active programs of education and many meetings with the pareents to discuss the aims of their respective educational philosophies and also the progress of individual children. In the latter way, both types of schools exemplified the lack of competitive environments and comparative evaluations and reported either verbally to the parents about their children's progress or wrote detailed, descriptive statements to inform the parents of how each individual child was progressing.

Concluding Comments

Montessori's and Krishnamurti's philosophies have more similarities than differences. The schools in practice have the common element that the children love being at school. They have succeeded as alternative schools in de-institutionalising the learning process and making the teacher-pupil relationship a caring and loving one.

In the final analysis, one main difference that appears as a stark contrast between the two types of education is the approach to method. Krishnamurti scorns adopting a particular method while Montessori tried to design a method that was based on her observation of the 'natural' child. Krishnamurti fears that teachers will become too mechanistic and cease to experiment with new ideas if they become too attached to a particular method. Indeed that may happen; yet in our experience, the Montessori teachers were anything but mechanistic and they were eager to learn of new ideas and to try them out in their classrooms.

The beauty of the Montessori classroom was that the teachers could take time to observe the child and adhere to Montessori's own warning, "follow the child" and they have not been afraid to question aspects of Montessori's philosophy that are being investigated by researchers in recent years (this applies particularly to teachers affiliated with the American Montessori Society). Yet they still kept the essential ingredients of the Montessori Method even though their teaching styles may have varied considerably. Tom Banta who wrote a paper which asked, "Is there such a thing as the Montessori Method?" concluded that despite the differences in teaching styles that there was a recognizable method and he identified four basic Montessori orientations that could be relevant to all pre-school education (we would extend these to all levels of education):

(1) the pre-school should be <u>child-centred</u> in terms of physical scale and conceptual scale;

(2) the pre-school should be concerned with the development of <u>freedom</u> in the child;

(3) the pre-school should not be afraid of <u>structure</u> for the child in its quest for the child's freedom, and

(4) the pre-school should be concerned with the <u>moral development</u> of the child and that is, to borrow A.S. Neil's phrase, "freedom without license". (Banta, 1966:6).

We believe that Krishnamurti's schools could benefit by experimenting with educational methods that cater for greater individualization. This could be extended to the idea of even adopting a modified Montessori Method which seems to be in harmony with Krishnamurti's ideas.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

FOOTNOTES

1 Krishnamurti broke away from the Theosophical Society in August 1929 when he denounced the Theosophical Society's claim that he was the Second Messiah. He dissolved the Order of the Star of the East which was organised to assist in the work of the "World Teacher". In 1934 he was literally thrown out of the Theosophical Society Headquarters at Adyar and did not set foot on the grounds again until 1981 when he was invited there by the present President of the Theosophical Society, Rahdia Burnier. (See Lutyens, Krishnamurti, The Years of Awakening, 1975, for a fascinating biography of the first thirty-eight years of Krishnamurti's life.)

2 In this paper we employ the present tense when referring to Montessori because we are not referring to the person but to her ideas expressed in her writings.

3 "Normalized", according to Montessori, refers to when a child learns to concentrate on a task and begins to have intrinsic discipline.

4 Montessori refers to training young women because her first teachers were women; however, in India she trained both men and women and in many countries today there are both male and female Montessori teachers.

5 The word "Montessorians" is an umbrella term that belies the many associations that have been formed to carry on the work of Maria Montessori. Rita Kramer in her biography of Maria Montessori (1976) gives a detailed account of the Montessori movement. The major split in the United States is between the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) and the American Montessori Society (AMS). The former association was founded by Maria Montessori, then carried on by her son, Mario Montessori, until his death in 1975, and is seen to attract followers who adhere more literally to the Montessori method. The latter group (AMS) split from AMI because it wanted to be more eclectic and to add new insights gained from recent research findings into child development.

REFERENCES

Banta, Tom, 1966, "Is There Really a Montessori Method?". Paper presented at the joint meeting of the Ohio Psychological Association and the Ohio Psychiatric Association in Cincinnati, Ohio, February 16.

Boyd, William (ed.), 1962, The Emile of Jean Jacques Rousseau. New York: Teachers College Press.

Kramer, Rita, 1976, Maria Montessori. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

Krishnamurti, Jiddu, 1930, "The Purpose of Education". An Address to the National College, Trichinopoly, India, January 12.

REFERENCES

Krishnamurti, Jiddu, 1953, Education and the Significance of Life. Ojai, California: Krishnamurti Writings, Inc.

Krishnamurti, Jiddu, 1958, On Learning. Ojai, California: Krishnamurti Writings, Inc.

Krishnamurti, Jiddu, 1974, Krishnamurti on Education. New Delhi: Orient Longman, Ltd.

Krishnamurti, Jiddu, 1982,"The Eternal Renewal", Bulletin, Krishnamurti Foundation, India, No. 3.

Lutyens, Mary, 1985, Krishnamurti, The Years of Awakening. New York: Avon Books.

Montessori, Maria, 1933, The Mass Explained to Children. New York: Sheed and Ward Publishers.

Montessori, Maria, 1942, Reconstruction in Education. Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House.

Montessori, Maria, 1943, Peace and Education. Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House.

Montessori, Maria, 1964, The Montessori Method. (First published in 1912) New York: Schocken Books, Inc.

Montessori, Maria, 1965, The Advanced Montessori Method, Volume I. (First published in 1918.) Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House.

Montessori, Maria, 1965A, Spontaneous Activity in Education. (The Advanced Montessori Method, first published in English in 1917.) New York: Schocken Books, Inc.

Montessori, Maria, 1967, The Absorbent Mind. (First published in 1949.) Madras: Kalekshetra Publications Press.

Montessori, Maria, 1975, The Formation of Man. Madras: Kalakshetra Publications Press.

Niel, Andre, 1957, Krishnamurti: The Man in Revolt. Bombay: Chetana Publishers.

Neill, A.S., 1960, Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing. New York: Hart Publishing Company, Inc.

Schmid, Jeannine, Religion, Montessori and the Home. New York: Benziger Bros.